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While President Obama's decision about sending more troops to Afghanistan is primarily a military one, it also has substantial budget implications that are adding pressure to limit the commitment, senior administration officials say.

The latest internal government estimates place the cost of adding 40,000 American troops and sharply expanding the Afghan security forces, as favored by Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the top American and allied commander in Afghanistan, at \$40 billion to \$54 billion a year, the officials said.

Even if fewer troops are sent, or their mission is modified, the rough formula used by the White House, of about \$1 million per soldier a year, appears almost constant.

So even if Mr. Obama opts for a lower troop commitment, Afghanistan's new costs could wash out the projected \$26 billion expected to be saved in 2010 from withdrawing troops from Iraq.

And the overall military budget could rise to as much as \$734 billion, or 10 percent more than the peak of \$667 billion under the Bush administration.

Such an escalation in military spending would be a politically volatile issue for Mr. Obama at a time when the government budget deficit is soaring, the economy is weak and he is trying to pass a costly health care plan.

Senior members of the House Appropriations Committee have already expressed reservations about the potential long-term costs of expanding the war in Afghanistan.

And Mr. Obama could find it difficult to win approval for the additional spending in Congress, where he would have to depend on Republicans to counter defections from liberal Democrats.

One senior administration official, who requested anonymity in order to discuss the details of confidential deliberations, said these concerns had added to the president's insistence at a White House meeting on Wednesday that each military option include the quickest possible exit strategy.

"The president focused a lot on ensuring that we were asking the difficult questions about getting to an end game here," the official said. "He knows we cannot sustain this indefinitely."

Sending fewer troops would lower the costs but would also place limitations on the buildup strategy. Sending 30,000 more troops, for example, would cost \$25 billion to \$30 billion a year while limiting how widely American forces could range. Deploying 20,000 troops would cost about \$21 billion annually but would expand mainly the training of Afghans, the officials said.

The estimated \$1 million a year it costs per soldier is higher than the \$390,000 congressional researchers estimated in 2006.

Military analysts said the increase reflects a surge in costs for mine-resistant troop carriers and surveillance equipment that would apply to troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

But some costs are unique to Afghanistan, where it can cost as much as \$400 a gallon to deliver fuel to the troops through mountainous terrain.

Some administration estimates suggest it could also cost up to \$50 billion over five years to more than double the size of the Afghan army and police force, to a total of 400,000. That includes recruiting, training and equipment.

At a stop at a military base in Alaska on Thursday, Mr. Obama told a gathering of soldiers that he would not risk more lives "unless it is necessary to America's vital interests." He added during his visit to Tokyo on Friday that he wanted to avoid taking any step that could be seen as an "open-ended commitment."

The administration said Friday that it planned to cut up to 5 percent at domestic agencies in fiscal 2011 as part of an effort to reduce the federal budget deficit, which rose to \$1.4 trillion with the economic stimulus and financial bailouts.

Several leading Republicans have criticized Mr. Obama's willingness to spend more freely on domestic programs and urged him to provide General McChrystal with the resources he is seeking in Afghanistan.

"Keeping our country safe: Isn't that the first job of government?" said Senator Christopher S. Bond, a Republican from Missouri and the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. "If we have just a minimalist counterterrorism strategy, the Taliban will come back over the mountains from Pakistan, and they will be followed by their co-conspirators from the Al Qaeda organization."

Cost is far from the only concern about escalating the war.

The debate intensified last week amid disclosures that the United States ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl W. Eikenberry, had sent cables to Washington expressing his reservations about deploying additional troops, citing weak Afghan leadership and widening corruption.

That kind of doubt could also make some in Congress hesitant to support an expansion of the war, especially with the midterm elections coming next year.

Representative David R. Obey, a Democrat from Wisconsin who heads the House Appropriations Committee, said recently that sending more troops to Afghanistan could drain the Treasury and "devour virtually any other priorities that the president or anyone in Congress had."

Representative John Murtha, Democrat of Pennsylvania and chairman of a subcommittee on defense appropriations, said in an interview that because of concerns about President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, he thought a majority of the 258 Democrats in the House would vote against any bill to pay for more troops. "A month ago, I would have said 60 to 70," he said.

"Can you pass one?" Mr. Murtha said. "It depends on the Republicans."

Mr. Murtha said he opposed sending more troops, though he would support any decision Mr. Obama made. He said he was concerned that even without a supplemental bill, total spending on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars would surge past \$1 trillion next year, which could hamper the economy for years to come.

Others said some Republicans could find it hard to justify a yes vote on troops after criticizing Mr. Obama for his spending. Some liberal Democrats said voters who had been drawn to Mr. Obama for his early opposition to the Iraq war could become disenchanted if he approved a major expansion in Afghanistan.

"In the times we're in right now, I just totally believe

that the public that elected President Obama really wants to see something different," said Representative Lynn Woolsey, Democrat of California.

During the presidential campaign, Mr. Obama was careful to say that he would not cut military spending while the nation was engaged in two wars. He also said it was important to shore up the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. And shortly after he took office, he approved sending an additional 21,000 soldiers there, bringing the total American force to 68,000.

Still, many of his supporters assumed that his pledges to withdraw from Iraq, and to rein in the cost overruns on high-tech weapons programs, would still produce significant savings.

But even though Mr. Obama has won battles to cancel the F-22 fighter plane and other advanced programs, the immediate savings have been offset by increased spending on the surveillance drones and mine-resistant vehicles needed in the field now.

And he recently signed a \$680 billion military authorization bill for fiscal 2010 that represented a 2.7 percent increase over the 2009 spending level and a 1.9 percent increase over President Bush's peak budget in fiscal 2008.

The administration has projected that spending on Iraq would drop by \$25.8 billion in fiscal 2010, to \$60.8 billion, as most of the troops withdraw.

It also expected spending on the Afghanistan war to increase by \$18.5 billion in fiscal 2010, to \$65.4 billion, for a net savings on the two wars of \$7.3 billion, if no more troops were added.